

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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R 300942Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHC 2447

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1789

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RP, SN

SUBJECT: ASEAN MEETING AND U.S. BASES IN PHILIPPINES

REFS: (A) STATE 099167; (B) MANILA 5449; (C) BANGKOK 7412

1. WE UNDERSTAND FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM WILL PROBABLY ACCOMPANY PRIME MINISTER LEE DURING HIS CALLS IN WASHINGTON. ALTHOUGH LEE HIMSELF HAS MADE PUBLIC REMARKS QUESTIONING UTILITY OF KEEPING U.S. FORCES IN THAILAND IF CONGRESS WON'T LET THEM ENGAGE IN MILITARY ACTION, REF C REPORTED LEE PRIVATELY URGED RTG TO "GO SLOW" IN PRESSING FOR U.S. WITHDRAWAL OF FORCES FROM THAILAND. LEE HAS SAID REPEATEDLY BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY THAT U.S. FORCES SHOULD REMAIN IN AREA AND IT IS QUITE LIKELY IN HIS WASHINGTON TALKS THAT HE WILL TAKE THE LEAD IN URGING US TO RETAIN OUR BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES. IN ANY ASEAN MEETING, WE THINK IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT RAJARATNAM OR OTHER GOS OFFICIALS WOULD TAKE A CONTRARY VIEW.

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2. ALTHOUGH GOS HAS ENDORSED IN PRINCIPLE CONCEPT OF SEA ZONE

OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY AND ULTIMATE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES, BOTH LEE AND RAJARATNAM HOLD STRONG RESERVATIONS ABOUT IT. THEY BOTH THINK IT IS NAIVE TO SUPPOSE THAT THE MAJOR POWERS CAN BE EXCLUDED FROM THE AREA, AND THAT A U.S. WITHDRAWAL WOULD ONLY OPEN THE AREA UP TO SOVIET AND PRC PENETRATION AND A POSSIBLE CONFLICT BETWEEN THEM FOR INFLUENCE.

3. WE SEE NO OBJECTION TO DISCUSSING PHILIPPINE BASES WITH BOTH LEE AND RAJA, BUT SUGGEST THAT IT BE HANDLED LOW-KEY AND IN A MANNER WHICH PRESUMES THAT WE ARE IN FACT REFLECTING THEIR OWN VIEWS.
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